

1934

A
BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF THE WORK OF

THE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.

KUNNAMKULAM

South India.

(ESTABLISHED IN 1934)



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A
BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF THE WORK OF
THE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND
KUNNAMKULAM

MANAGER:- K. T. MATTHEW, B. A., B. L.

A R. P. PRESS.



APPRECIATORY REMARKS

“LAUDABLE UNDERTAKING”

T. Kunjhunny Menon Esq. , M. A. , L. T. ,

Inspector of Schools, Northern Division, Cochin State, writes:

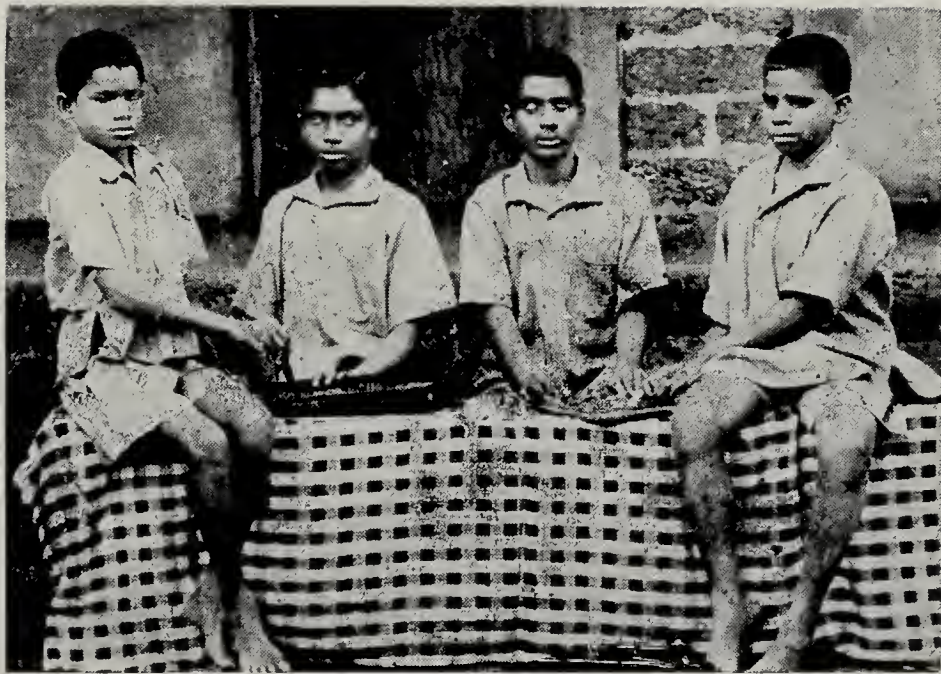
“Visited the school on 20-12-1111 and found the work of the school quite pleasant. The children are found cheerful and appear to be much relieved from the depression which ought to be their condition due to the natural defect. I wish this laudable undertaking real success.”

“RESCUE WORK OF THE HIGHEST VALUE”

The Rt. Rev. E. A. L. Moore,

Bishop in Travancore and Cochin, writes on 5th October, 1936:

“I paid a rather hurried visit to the School after school hours today. There were some twelve blind pupils present drawn mostly from the Cochin State, a few however from British Malabar. The school is for boys only. The teacher had his training in the well-known institution for the blind in Palamcottah and employs the methods in use there. I heard the pupils read and sing and saw some of their handiwork. This work of providing eyes for the blind must require much love and patience, but carries with it its own reward in the wonderful results which it achieves. It is rescue work of the highest value.”



Boys at games.

“THE CHILDREN VERY HAPPY AND PRACTICAL”

His Grace Abraham Mar Thoma, M. A. , D. D. ,
Suffragan Metropolitan, Mar Thoma Syrian Church, Malabar,
writes on 17-10-1936:

“A very good and useful service is rendered by the School for the Blind. The children are very happy and practical. The effort spent for the instruction is very well spent. One has to congratulate the teacher in giving himself so whole heartedly to this work. May God bless it. May His blessings be upon all those who take such a kindly interest in our helpless children.”

“METHODS OF TEACHING UP TO DATE”

Hon'ble Miss Emiley Kinnaird,

Secretary, Y. W. C. A. , Calcutta, writes on 5-11-'36:

“This Blind School compares favourably with other Blind Schools I have seen and is quite up to date in its methods of teaching the Blind which are so helpful to teaching and gives them opportunities of employing themselves also out of school time.....”

“BEAUTIFUL AND WONDERFUL”

Miss Frances Hitch,

Y. W. C. A. , New Zealand, writes on 14th Nov. , 1936:

“A most beautiful and wonderful work. ”

“GLADNESS”

Lissie M. Fowler,

Y. W. C. A., Secretary Chief, N. S. Wales, Australia, writes on 14th Nov, 1936:

“I am very impressed with my visit to the Blind School and there is gladness that it is giving such service to so many who cannot see the light or all the beautiful things of life. ”

“DESERVES ENCOURAGEMENT”

V. K. Achutha Menon Esq. , M. A. , B. Com. ,

Director of Industries and Commerce, Cochin State, writes:—

“I had occasion to visit this school on 17-4-'37. The work is simply philanthropic. The sight is moving; but the boys seem to be quite happy. “What is the thing called light?” It is light that the institution gives to the blind boys. The school deserves every encouragement. ”

“PROGRESS ASTONISHING”

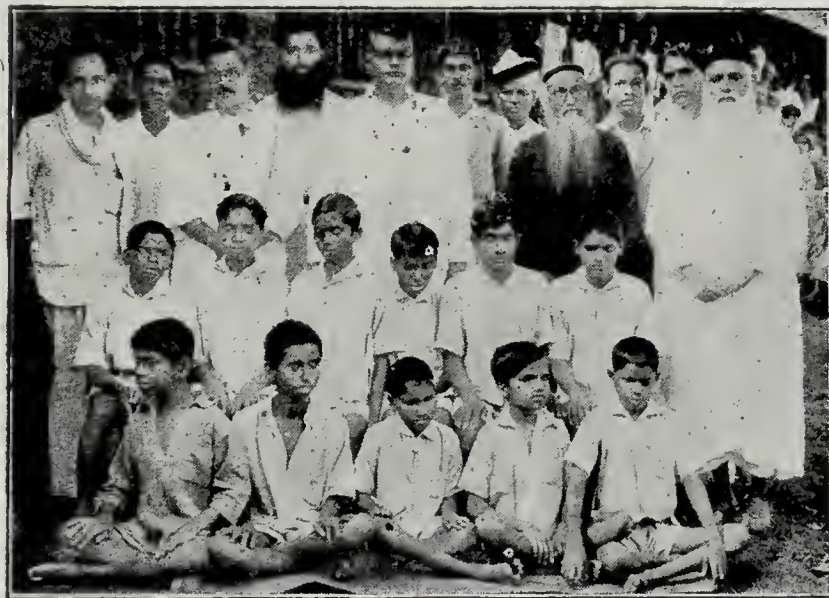
Messrs. K. Bader and K. Henmann,
Missionaries, Parapperi and Vaniamcolum, write on 31-8-1937:

“We paid a short visit to this School and were very much impressed by the good spirit prevailing here. We saw the boys reading and writing both in Malayalam and in English and were astonished to see their progress in such a short time. We wish this institution God’s blessing.....”

“VERY GOOD AND NOBLE WORK”

The Hon. Dr. P. Subbaroyan,
Minister for Education, Madras, writes on 2-12-'37:

“I was given an opportunity of visiting the School for the Blind at Kunnamkulam, and saw some of the work that is very good. It is a noble work and I wish it every success. ”



The Hon. Dr. P. Subbaroyan, Minister for Education, Madras
and his Parliamentary Secretary visiting the School.

“DESERVES HELP”

C. J. Varkey Esq. , M. A. , M. L. A. ,
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Madras,
writes on 2-12-'37:

“A very noble enterprise in the cause of the suffering humanity which deserves help from the Government and the public. ”

“JUSTIFIES ITS EXISTENCE”

H. H. Moran Mar Baselios, Catholicos of the East, writes on 18-1-1938:

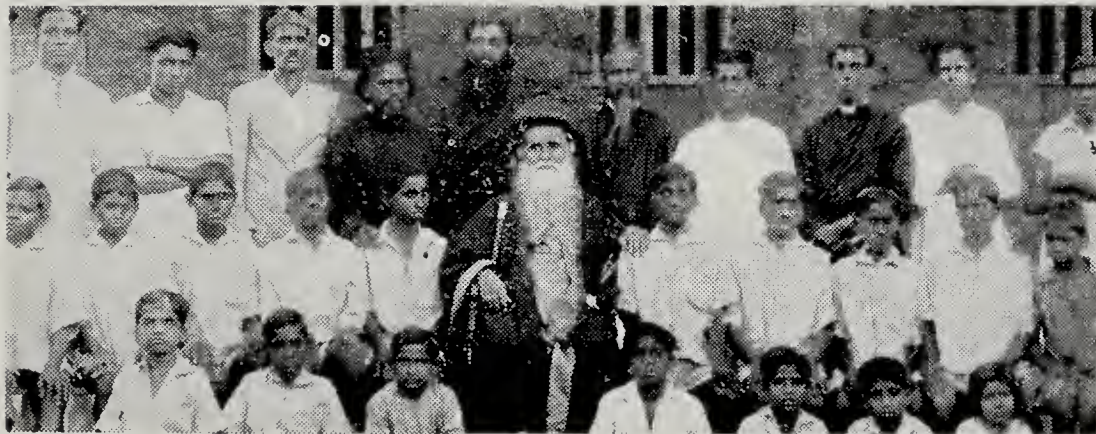
“.....This institution fully justifies its existence and rightly deserves the sympathy, support and encouragement of the Government and of all those who are blessed with what these children can never enjoy. “In as much as you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me”. The institution has our blessings and best wishes. ”

“CHEERFULNESS PERVADES”

Captain A. R. Poduval,

Director of Public Health and Panchayats, Cochin State,
writes on 25-3-1938:

“My wife and myself visited the School for the Blind, Kunnampulam, and we are delighted to see the working of the Institution. The facility with which the students read according to the “System for the Blind”, and do other pieces of useful work is astonishing. More than all which struck us most was the atmosphere of cheerfulness pervading the place, and the expression of same feeling exhibited by the students in the face of such a serious handicap as loss of sight. The organisers of this Institution deserves every encouragement.”



His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios, Catholicos of the East,
blessing the children.

“LIFE’S BURDEN LIGHTENED”

M. A Chakko Esq. , B. A. ,

Retired Excise Commissioner, Cochin State, writes on 26-6-1938:

“I was able to pay a visit to the School and Home of the blind boys this evening. Life’s burden is being lightened for them by the very thoughtful and charitable endeavour of the founders and promoters of this institution. I am very much impressed by what progress the boys are able to show in reading, writing and calculation. It deserves support from all fellow creatures. ”

“WORK EFFICIENT”

The Hon. Mr. A. Sivarama Menon, B. A. , B. L. ,

Minister for Rural Development, Cochin State, writes on 7-7-1938:

“.....I was greatly impressed with its efficient working. There is no doubt whatever that it serves a very useful purpose and it deserves every

encouragement at the hands of the public. I wish this institution every success. ”

GREAT HUMANITARIAN WORK”

The Hon. Moulana Yakub Hasan,

Minister for Public Works, Madras, writes on 15-1-'39:

“I need hardly say that this institution is doing great humanitarian work. It has my sympathy and good wishes. ”

“REMARKABLE PROGRESS ALL ROUND”

Rao Sahib I. N. Menon, M. A. , B Litt (Oxon),

Director of Public Instruction,

Cochin State, writes on 20-1-'39:

“I am delighted to find that this institution has made remarkable progress all round during the comparatively brief period of its existence and has become a home of success to the unfortunate children to whom nature has denied her most elementary gifts. The manager and staff deserve both congratulation and encouragement in their great humanitarian enterprise.”

“IMPRESSED BY THE GOOD WORK”

Sir R. K. Shunmukham Chetty, K. C. I. E. ,

Dewan of Cochin, writes on 15-2-1939:

“Visited the school to-day. I was impressed by the good work done. ”

A GREAT LESSON

What the Blind teach—Communal harmony.



Represent all Communities. All live together in happiness.

(THE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND, KUNNAMKULAM.)

A

BRIEF REPORT

EDUCATE THE BLIND

“The heaviest burden on the blind is not blindness but idleness and they can be relieved of their greater burden”, says Helen Keller. To relieve them of idleness and make them useful members of Society, education is the best remedy. The experience of those who work amongst them shows that they can be educated to a high level, and perhaps in some cases, they may respond in a very special way. There are many instances of those who are handicapped in one direction being stimulated to the display of extra-ordinary genius in another direction. Some of the most brilliant musicians have been blind.

THE BLIND IN INDIA

In India the education of the blind is in a nascent state. By the Census Return of 1931, it has been calculated that there are 601,370 blind persons in India but schools to educate them, only a very few there are. The public mind does not appear to be fully alive to the gravity of the cause and is certainly slow to feel to the measures to alleviate the sufferings of these unfortunates.

OPENING OF THE SCHOOL

In Cochin State, Travancore and British Malabar no attention was given to the education of the blind. There was no school for them, though the States stood foremost in India in literacy. To fill up this void, the School as an experiment was started in August, 1934, in a spirit of adventure and faith.

TEACHERS AND PUPILS

Before starting the School, two teachers had been specially trained by the management at the Schools for the Blind at Palamcottah and one of them Mr. Christian Kallingal took charge of the School in August 1934 with one pupil; but the number of pupils steadily increased from year to year.

Among the pupils there are caste Hindus, non-caste Hindus including two Harijans, Christians and Muslims and they belong to Cochin State, Travancore, British Malabar and South Canara.

TOO EXPENSIVE

The expenses to educate the blind are very much greater in proportion than those of educating normal children. Special school requisites are required which we are getting from the National Institute for the Blind, London, paying postage and customs duty to boot. And it must be remembered that children who are afflicted by blindness need infinitely more supervision and personal attention. Further no pupil pays any tuition fee.

HAPPIER THAN HOME

Moreover, most of the pupils so far joined are so poor that twenty of them depend upon us not only for their education but also for feeding, clothing, medical aid, lodging and every other help. Again, many of the children do not go home for all the holidays. They find the school where all their needs are promptly attended to happier than their homes.

HOSTEL

There is a hostel attached to the School, in which accomodation is provided for all the pupils.

ADDITIONAL TEACHERS

With the increase in the number of pupils it became necessary to open more classes and to requisition the services of Mr. K. I. Pavu, the other teacher trained by the Management at the Schools for the Blind, at Palamcottah. There are five classes now and the sixth standard we will have to open before long; and one more teacher has to be appointed soon.

SUBJECTS TAUGHT

Instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic and other subjects is being given to the blind pupils as in other schools. Though it takes a little longer time for a blind child to master with his fingers the letters of a language and numeration, still when he has mastered this knowledge, he can read as swiftly as a sighted child.

DEVELOP THE SENSES

Object-lessons are given to all the pupils in order to help them to acquire knowledge of their surroundings and develop the remaining four senses as some compensation for their loss of sight.

HANDICRAFT

Special attention is given to impart instruction in handicraft for making the pupils as far as possible self-supporting after leaving the school, thus rendering the life of the blind tolerably happy and bearable.

MUSIC

A singing class is also arranged. A small harmonium has been purchased and it has provided much enjoyment, besides being a great help to the singing class. Flute and other small musical instruments are also provided for the use of the blind boys. A music teacher is appointed, and it is encouraging to see that the music class is well made use of by them.

DRAMATIC TROUPE

In this connection special mention may be made that the blind pupils of the School staged the musical drama "Sundaravalli" in the most natural manner. Captain A. R. Poduval, Ag. Director of Public Health and Panchayats presided and on the occasion two medals were presented to the best actors by Messrs. P. C. Kunjhathu and P. C. Verghese. The collections made were just enough to meet the expenses.



Dramatic Troupe.
(Blind pupils staging the "Sundaravalli")

PUBLIC APPRECIATION

Under the distinguished patronage of Mrs. & Mr. C. P. Skrine I. C S., Resident to the Madras States, the pupils re-enacted the drama in the Rama Varma Theatre, Trichur on 24th Sep, 1938. Mrs. & Mr. K. Achutha Menon, B. A., B. L., Diwan Peishkar and many other distinguished ladies and gentlemen were present. Three silver Medals were presented to the best actors by Mrs. K. Achutha Menon, and Messrs. P. K. Subramanya Iyer, B. A., B. L. and A. Sankara Poduval, B. A., B. L. A silver cup was presented by Mr. K. A. Joseph, Trichur, to T. J. Devasy, the boy who acted the part of "Sundaravalli". The response from the public who very much appreciated the histrionic talents of the blind was encouraging and the collections were in excess of the expenses by Rs. 39-15-0.

GAMES AND PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Physical exercise is specially attended to, for with the blind all forms of physical activities must be encouraged in order to give them health and

confidence in their own powers of achievements. In-door and out-door games are encouraged, and to provide enjoyment during leisure hours, besides locally made games requisites, apparatus and appliances specially made for the use of the blind by the National Institute for the Blind, London, are furnished. It is really happy to see the blind children enjoying in-door games such as Cheery Families, Draughts, The Fifteen Puzzle, Noughts and Crosses, Patience Cards, The Game of Centerpeg, etc.

GARDENING

This is another interesting activity of the school children.

TRAINING ADDITIONAL STAFF

Success so far achieved has convinced that the number of pupils will soon increase, necessitating the appointment of additional staff. As teachers specially trained to instruct the blind are not readily available, the management sent a teacher to the Blind School at Mount Lavinia in Ceylon for

undergoing training so that the school may have the advantage of having teachers trained at different recognised and well-managed institutions for the blind in India and outside; and he has joined the school as an additional teacher. Mr.K. I. Pavu,the Head Master,was also sent to Colombo to undergo further training.

THE BLIND AND RURAL UPLIFT

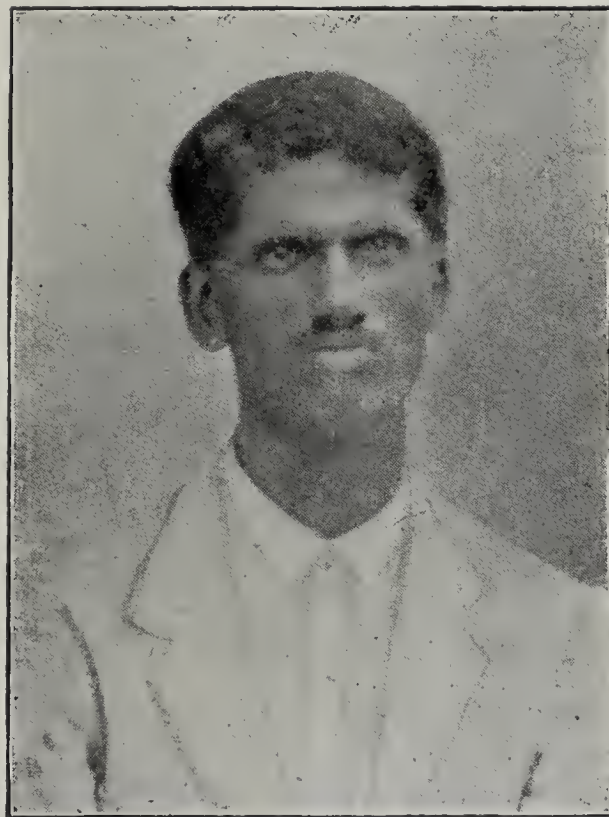
Mr. K. P. Ittyerah one of the teachers, has undergone training at the Practical Training School in Rural Re-construction at Marthandom in Travancore under the supervision of Dr. Spencer Hatch. Arrangements are being made to open a Rural Re-construction centre attached to the School. This is a novel experiment, and if it succeeds, it will be a boon to the villagers who form the backbone of the country and provide work to the blind children after their literary course, as their services can be availed of in poultry-farming, bee-keeping and such other useful work.

A GREAT LOSS

A sorrow befell the school in 1936 when Mr. Christian Kallingal who was the first member of the staff was taken ill and soon sank peacefully asleep. He had always taken a very real interest in the School and we recall with gratitude the great personal interest which he always took in the pupils, living with them and eating with them. We record our high appreciation of the services rendered to the School by him.

PUPILS' FUND

The net amount of Rs. 39-15-0 collected by staging the musical drama "Sundaravalli" at Trichur has been set apart to form nucleus of a Pupils' Fund which is intended for meeting the travelling expenses of poor and deserving pupils and giving pocket-money to those who leave the School after finishing the full course of studies. The amount is deposited in the Post office Savings Bank.



The late Mr. Christian Kallingal.
The first teacher.

H. H. THE MAHA RAJA'S BIRTHDAY

The Children enjoy a holiday on the Birthday of His Highness the Maha Raja of Cochin. The Government have been pleased to meet the expenses of giving a feast on that day. In 1939 the Tahasildar of Talappilly Taluk was in charge of the arrangement and the children very much enjoyed the feast.

BIRTHDAY GIFT

On her birthday (27-3-1939) Srimathi Malathi Amma, wife of Mr. A. Sankara Poduval, B. A. , B. L. , Advocate, Trichur, visited the school children and after distributing sweets and spending some time happily with them, presented a set of school uniform to each of them, which they highly appreciated, this being the first time that such a gift is given to them.

WILL YOU KINDLY REMEMBER OUR BLIND CHILDREN
ON YOUR BIRTHDAY?

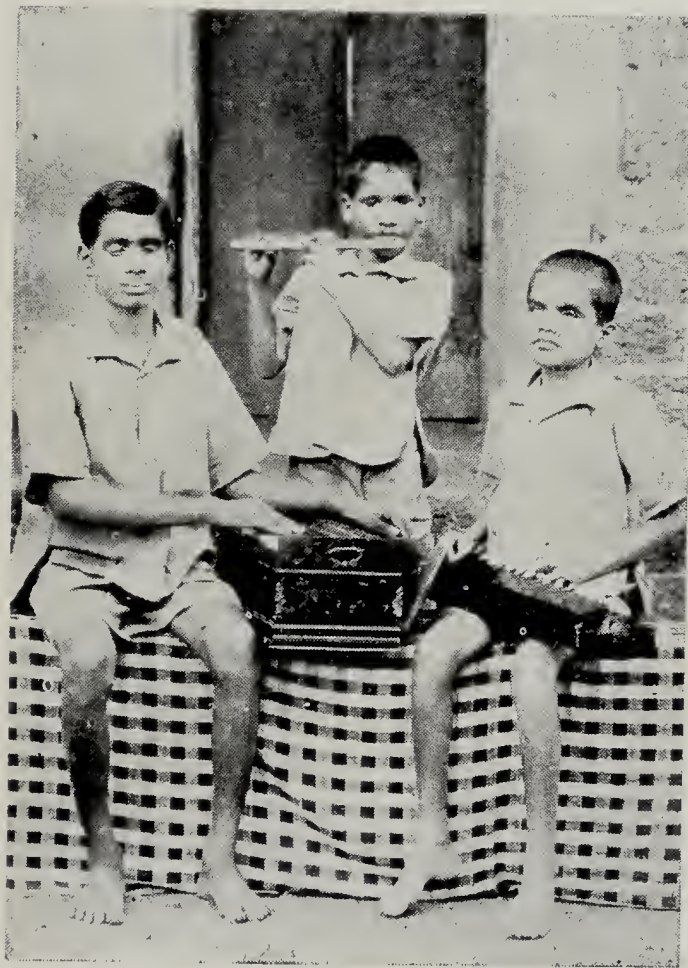
SCHOOL DAY CELEBRATIONS

The School Day Celebrations were for the first time conducted on 25th March 1938. Captain, A. R. Poduval presided on the occasion.

In 1939 (February 15th), under the distinguished presidentship of Sir R. K. Shunmukham Chetty, K.C. I. E., Dewan of Cochin, the School Day Celebrations took place. A variety entertainment was performed on the occasion by the blind boys. At the close of the meeting, in appreciation of the useful work rendered by the school, the President announced an encouraging donation towards school expenses and for giving a feast to the pupils.

SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATION

A. S. Benny, one of our School children, appeared in 1939 for the Lower Secondary Government Scholarship Examination. This is the first time that a blind boy sits for this Examination competing with ordinary children enjoying special advantages. The boy creditably passed as fifth



Playing Musical Instruments.

in rank. The Government Scholarship of the monthly value of Rs. 3/ tenable for the L. S. Department course is awarded to him.

OUR PROBLEM

The steady increase in the number of pupils, realisation by parents that blind children can be educated like other children, the appreciative and encouraging words of those who have visited the School and the success so far achieved have convinced us that the time has come to establish the School as a permanent institution at a more central place. The difficulties, financial and otherwise, in running a Residential School for the blind providing besides free tuition, free lodging and boarding to the poor, we realise, should be a stimulus rather than an obstacle to sustained effort, for it is not conceivable that we should leave those who suffer in this way to be a burden on Society. The helplessness of any section of the community is regarded as a challenge to our growing social and humanitarian sense. And because of their need and helplessness, when unassisted, we should make a special effort on their behalf

to restore them to an equality with other members of society who are not so grievously handicapped.

OUR NEEDS

Our needs are great and the call is still insistent. It is not enough that we should be able to continue our work as at present. All around us there is an enormous field yet untouched which calls us forward to even greater effort. We must rely on those who are able to give, to do their best to help to fulfil the task of being "eyes for the Blind".

RECOGNITION BY GOVERNMENT

We are very grateful to the Government of His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin for recognising and granting aid to the School, Sir R. K. Shunmukham Chetty, K. C. I. E., Dewan of Cochin for his encouraging support and Rao Sahib I. N. Menon M. A., B. Litt (Oxen), Director of Public Instruction for his keen interest in the steady progress of the institution.

THANKS

Our thanks are due to the authorities of the Schools for the Blind at Palamcottah and Mount Lavinia in Ceylon for training teachers for our School and to Dr. D. Spencer Hatch for giving training to some of them at the Rural Re-construction Centre at Martandam. To the local Y. W. C. A. we owe a deep debt of gratitude for placing their Seva Mandir Buildings at our disposal for running the School. We have to thank also Mr. P. I. Ittoop, the proprietor of A. R. P. Press, for doing printing work free of charge, the Mangalore Municipal Council for giving a stipend to a pupil from Mangalore and the District Board of Malabar for their donation.

To everyone who has helped us with money, gifts, thoughts and prayers, we extend our heartfelt gratitude.

K. I. PAVU,

Head Master.

K. T. MATTHEW,

Manager.



AN APPEAL.

SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND KUNNAMKULAM.

It is no exaggeration to say that the blind being denied the privilege of enjoying the bright, beautiful and wonderful things of this world have a mere vegetative existence. Added to this, stark poverty of most of them makes their grim struggle for existence so much the worse; and just imagine their condition when despised by humanity!

In western countries there are numerous schools, literary and industrial, started with the object of ameliorating the pitiable plight of the blind. But, unfortunately, in India, where the population of the blind is more than 600,000 such institutions are few and far between.

In Kerala, comprising of Cochin State, Travancore and British Malabar, there are more than 10,000 blind, and for imparting education to them there is no institution

other than the school for the Blind at Kunnamkulam. In the school there are blind children not only from Cochin State, Travancore and British Malabar but also from South Canara where there is no such institution. As there is no restriction of admission based on caste, community or religion among the pupils there are Christians—Protestants, Roman Catholics and other denominations—Nambudiries, Nairs, Thiyyas, Harijans, Muslims and other communities.

All the pupils who have so far joined the School are so poor that they are given free tuition, besides free lodging, boarding, clothing and medical aid, and as a result of this, the expenses of running the institution have been steadily increasing.

The management therefore request philanthropic citizens and public benefactors to extend their support to this humanitarian institution.

In this connection we cannot resist the temptation to quote the words of the

late lamented His Majesty the King Emperor George V. "There is no sadder affliction than that which closes to the blind one great channel of common experience and common intercourse and cuts off the sufferers from the chief fields of knowledge and activity. It is a commonplace that men do not realise the value of that which they have never lost, and I cannot too strongly urge upon all who unreflectingly enjoy the blessings of sight, the duty of showing practical sympathy with every effort to break down, as far as may be, the barriers which shut out the blind from a full share in the common interests and pleasures of life".

Subscriptions may kindly be remitted to:

THE MANAGER,
SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND,
KUNNAMKULAM,
COCHIN STATE,
(S. India)

Will You Please

write the names and

addresses of those who

are interested in giving

light to the blind

and will **Support**

their cause to

send copies

of the Report

with the

Appeal ?

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Please return to

THE MANAGER,

SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND,

KUNNAMKULAM.

COCHIN STATE.

S. India.

SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

I wish to contribute to the School for the Blind the sum of:-

- (a) Rs. (£ s. d.) for the Building Fund.
(b) Rs. (£ s. d.) for the Support of a Child in the School.*
(c) Rs. (£ s. d.) as an Annual Subscription towards
the General Funds of the School.

[* Rs. 120/-(£ 8) will support a blind child in the School for one year]

Name

Address

Date

N. B. This is to be forwarded with a cheque or a money order to:-

The Manager,

SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.

Kunnampakulam. (*Cochin State*)

S. India.

